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K. T. Maddy

Clark County Extension, Logandale, Nevada

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Socialized Veterinary Medicine

*K. T. Maddy, D.V.M.
Clark County Extension Veterinarian
Logandale, Nevada*

IN SOUTHERN Nevada there are 2 small irrigated valleys which were populated by Mormon farmers in the 1870's. With the building of Boulder Dam, Boulder City and the growth of Las Vegas the consequent increased need for dairy products resulted in the farmers of these 2 valleys to enter into the dairy business to a considerable extent in the last decade.

With the introduction of dairying came the ensuing veterinary problems. In the 2 valleys, which are 40 miles apart, there was a total of 1,200 dairy cows. There were a few horses, a number of range cattle, 10 or 15 pigs, about 100 chickens and a few dogs. The prospects of inducing a veterinarian to live and practice this area were nil.

An appeal was made to the extension service for veterinary aid. Federal funds were available at that time for war food production assistants and a veterinarian was hired to work through the Agricultural Extension Service as a practitioner for a salary of \$3,000 per year. He was furnished an office, equipment, part time bookkeeper, automobile and expenses. His duty was to make calls and charged only for the cost of the medicine used.

The advantages of this socialized medicine setup were:

1. It gave the dairymen veterinary service which otherwise would not have been available.
2. It gave a young veterinarian a guaranteed income.
3. It gave an inexperienced veterinarian valuable experience.
4. It made the dairymen appreciate the value of veterinary service over

the value of their own improvised home remedy skills.

The disadvantages of the socialized medicine setup were:

1. The dairymen took advantage of the service so wholeheartedly that it sometimes became a burden to make calls to treat small cuts and scratches and to examine cows following calves just to see if they still normal.
2. The veterinarian had no incentive for increased effort as his salary was guaranteed.
3. The dairymen failed to realize the monetary value of the veterinary services performed as it was all free to them. The veterinarian was considered just another government agent from which the public was entitled to everything that they could get.

With the withdrawal of federal funds the valleys were suddenly presented with the prospect of no veterinary service. The county commissioner was induced to provide funds to partially support a veterinarian and a new system of provision of veterinary service was set up. It is explained by the following memorandum.

The following points will constitute a memorandum of understanding between the veterinarian hired by the cooperative effort of the Clark County Extension Service and the Clark County Livestock Improvement Association and these 2 organizations:

1. The veterinarian will be hired by cooperative effort. The Extension Service will pay the veterinarian at

the rate of \$135.00 per month out of county funds during the life of the agreement. The Clark County Livestock Improvement Association will pay for the veterinarian in accordance with the provisions as listed in item 2 below. In the event that the total sum of \$135.00 per month plus the amount of money received by the veterinarian from the Clark County Livestock Improvement Association does not total \$3,000.00 for a full 12-month period then the Extension Service will pay sufficient salary above the \$135.00 so the veterinarian will be guaranteed \$3,000.00 per year. In the event that the amount of money received from the Association, plus \$135.00 per month is more than \$3,000.00, this money will belong to the veterinarian.

2. One half of all service fees, animal unit fees and profit on drugs collected by the Association will be retained by the Association to pay operating and other costs and build up a reserve fund. The other 50 per cent will be paid on a monthly basis to the veterinarian.
3. The veterinarian will be available for educational work outlined by the Extension Service on clean milk production, disease prevention measures, artificial breeding, mastitis prevention and treatments, and any other problems of a veterinary nature which may require educational or extension work.
4. The Extension Service will provide a car for the use of the veterinarian.
5. All travel expenses, including gas and oil, upkeep and depreciation on the car and subsistence for the veterinarian when he is out of Moapa Valley on business, will be paid by the Clark County Livestock Improvement Association or by the Extension Service according to work being done.
6. The Association will assess animal unit fees for the veterinary service at the rate of \$2.50 per animal unit per year for those wishing to pay

their veterinary charges in this way. Others will pay for services as they get them in accordance with regular veterinary service fees.

7. No animal unit system will be developed to include small animal work.
8. The sale of drugs will be included as part of the veterinary department of the Association and drugs will be sold to members at cost and non-members at regular retail prices.
9. There will be no free service except as educational work organized through the Extension Service.
10. All books of the Association will be kept by a bookkeeper hired by the Association, and all persons handling funds at the Association will be bonded.
11. A schedule of fees and service charges will be made available to all dairymen and farmers in the area to enable them to decide whether they wish to pay for services on an animal unit basis or on a private service basis.
12. The veterinarian will be allowed a vacation of 30 days per year and sick leave of 14 days per year in accordance with the Extension Service provisions governing annual leave for County Agents.
13. The veterinarian will be covered under State Industrial Compensation Laws during the time he is on official business.
14. It is understood that emergency calls will have preference over other types of calls for the veterinarian's time. Members calls will have preference over non-members calls except in cases where the non-member has an emergency case and the member does not. Large animal work will at all times have preference over small animal work. The veterinarian will be the judge as to which cases have preference in accordance with these provisions.
15. It is understood that the Association will be responsible for all collections of animal unit fees and the veter-

- inarian will be responsible for all private service fees and drugs sold.
16. This agreement may be terminated by either party for any reason upon 30 days' notice to the other parties concerned provided that all obligations of each party to the others are satisfied in full when the agreement is terminated.

The advantages of this new system of subsidized veterinary service are:

1. Here again it is an excellent opportunity for a young veterinarian to gain valuable experience.
2. An annual salary of \$3,000.00 is guaranteed. In addition about \$700.00 is paid as an expense account to cover the cost of board and room while the veterinarian is in the valley other than where his permanent residence is maintained. There is also an opportunity to make over \$3,000.00 per year. The money retained by the association is merely put into a fund to build a clinic building and residence for the veterinarian at some future date.
3. An automobile, a complete set of instruments, a complete line of drugs and biologics, a complete line of laboratory materials, an office, and a part time bookkeeper are all furnished.
4. Wherever the veterinarian feels there is some need for education on some certain point he merely writes a letter and the extension service makes a copy available to all dairy-men. Items such as the following are typical: The Control of Infectious Bovine Mastitis, The Use of DDT, The Prevention of Foot Rot, The Prevention of the Spread of Cow Pox, The Dangers of Promiscuous Use of Penicillin in Mastitis Treatment.
5. There is complete accord and good will with the Farm Bureau and Extension Service and with the dairy men, for they realize it is their program. Any time veterinary problems are presented to the other extension officials, the problem is immediately referred to the

veterinarian who handles it as he sees fit.

6. As for the fee systems, some dairy-men choose the animal unit system and others choose to pay regular veterinary fees as they fall due.

The disadvantage of the subsidized veterinary service system is that there is a certain amount of lack of incentive on the part of the veterinarian as he realizes in an isolated, restricted area of this sort there is little chance for expansion and there is little chance of making much over the guaranteed salary even with a considerable amount of effort.

Conclusions

In conclusion it can be said that the true socialized veterinary medicine, setup did not work efficiently. The adjusted system, discussed above, is more efficient and more satisfactory to all concerned. It is a system which can be used in certain sub-marginal areas of the United States which could not have veterinary service otherwise. However, it is not a system that has a place in an average agricultural area where the American system of free enterprise should apply to veterinarians as well as to other businesses.

This article was taken from the notes and memorandums of Dr. K. T. Maddy by R. R. Rognes, '47.

An absorbent surgical dressing made of starch is proposed by Bice, McMasters and Hilbert of the Northern Regional Research Laboratory, Peoria, Ill. Sponges of starch may be prepared by freezing and drying. It is suggested they may be saturated with any desired medicament and applied to a surface, implanted in a wound or placed in the abdominal or other body cavity and left there to be slowly absorbed, thus releasing the medicament gradually.

Vicuna wool is from a hardy gazelle-like little animal, 2 feet high, which lives in the high Andes in Bolivia and Peru; the vicuna is related to the camel, and its wool is probably the softest of all animal fibers.